



**RIC FLAIR: "RODDY PIPER IS TOO SMART FOR HIS OWN GOOD!"**

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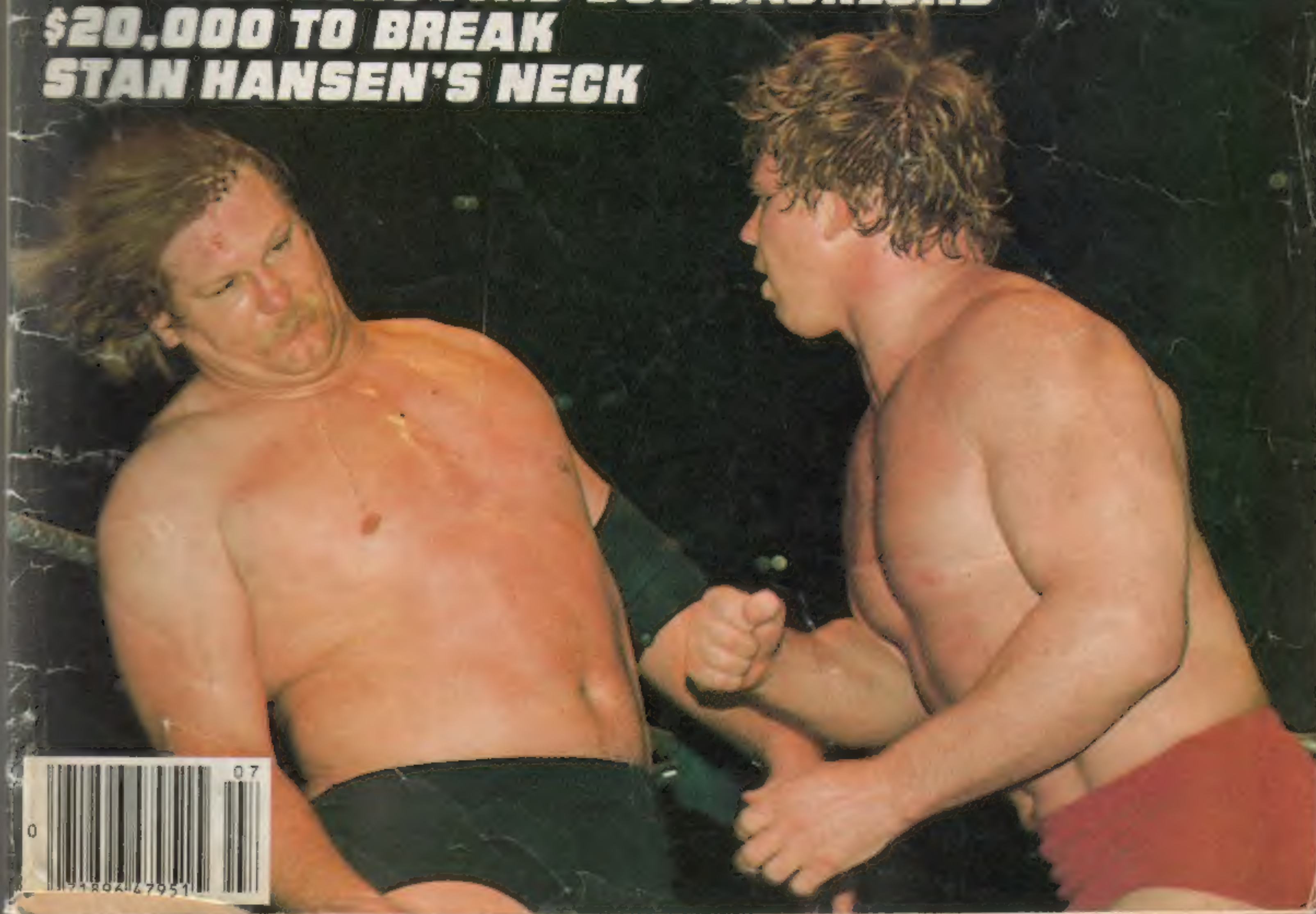
# Wrestler<sup>THE</sup>



**ARE WE  
WATCHING  
DUSTY RHODES  
COMMIT  
SUICIDE?**



**THE MAN WHO PAID BOB BACKLUND  
\$20,000 TO BREAK  
STAN HANSEN'S NECK**





# OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

## WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

- Champion: BOB BACKLUND  
 1—STAN HANSEN  
 2—KING KONG MOSCA  
 3—PEDRO MORALES  
 4—MAGNIFICENT MURACO  
 5—SGT. SLAUGHTER  
 6—MIL MASCARAS  
 7—PAT PATTERSON  
 8—RICK MARTEL  
 9—KILLER KHAN  
 10—TONY GAREA

## AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

- Champion: VERNE GAGNE  
 1—NICK BOCKWINKEL  
 2—JOHN STUDD  
 3—CRUSHER BLACKWELL  
 4—DINO BRAVO  
 5—BILLY ROBINSON  
 6—JIM BRUNZELL  
 7—BARON VON RASCHKE  
 8—TITO SANTANA  
 9—GREG GAGNE  
 10—MAD DOG VACHON

## MOST POPULAR

- 1—ANDRE THE GIANT  
 2—BRUNO SAMMARTINO  
 3—DUSTY RHODES  
 4—MIL MASCARAS  
 5—BOB BACKLUND  
 6—RICK STEAMBOAT  
 7—PEDRO MORALES  
 8—IVAN PUTSKI  
 9—JUNKYARD DOG  
 10—DINO BRAVO



PEDRO MORALES



TONY ATLAS



CRUSHER BLACKWELL



ANDRE THE GIANT

## NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

- Champion: HARLEY RACE  
 1—RODDY PIPER  
 2—TED DiBIASE  
 3—RICK STEAMBOAT  
 4—TONY ATLAS  
 5—BARRY WINDHAM  
 6—SWEET BROWN SUGAR  
 7—MR. WRESTLING II  
 8—DUSTY RHODES  
 9—LES THORNTON  
 10—KERRY VON ERICH

## TAG TEAMS

- 1—IVAN KOLOFF & RAY STEVENS  
 2—THE MOONDOGS  
 3—JESSE VENTURA & ADRIAN ADONIS  
 4—THE FABULOUS FREEBIRDS  
 5—THE ASSASSINS  
 6—MR. FUJI & TENRU  
 7—TONY GAREA & RICK MARTEL  
 8—PAUL JONES & MASKED SUPERSTAR  
 9—GREG GAGNE & JIM BRUNZELL  
 10—DAVID & KEVIN VON ERICH

## MOST HATED

- 1—STAN HANSEN  
 2—SGT. SLAUGHTER  
 3—KILLER KHAN  
 4—GREG VALENTINE  
 5—MASKED GRAPPLER  
 6—KEN PATERA  
 7—ASSASSIN #1  
 8—BUDDY ROBERTS  
 9—EDDY MANSFIELD  
 10—DENNIS CONDREY



# CORRESPONDENTS Reports



Mongolian Stomper had extreme problems handling 457-pound Andre the Giant.

**COLUMBUS, OH—Correspondent: Shawn Wiseman**—Yet another great card at the Ohio Center pitted Andre the Giant against the fiendish Mongolian Stomper. The match see-sawed back and forth with Stomper using all his cruel tricks, yet unable to upend Andre. Several times it seemed Andre would stop Stomper, but the wild man from Asia wriggled free. Finally Andre threw Stomper into the ropes and then powerslammed him. That finished Stomper and gave Andre a big victory.

In other matches, The Fabulous Freebirds cheated their way to victory over Ted DiBiase and Robert Fuller . . . Ole and Gene Anderson managed to get past Dusty Rhodes and Mr. Wrestling

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to : Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

II . . . Tony Atlas annihilated Kevin Sullivan . . . Steve O and Bobby Eaton wrestled to a 30-minute draw.

**NEW CASTLE, DE—Correspondent: Richard Williams**—Even before the bell rang, Sgt. Slaughter attacked WWF

champion Bob Backlund. As Backlund fought back, he was aided by the capacity crowd chanting "Gomer," a nickname which upsets Slaughter. As the cruel former Marine drill instructor saw the match was slipping away, he ran out of the ring. But Backlund wasn't finished with him. Really angry, Backlund grabbed Slaughter and the fight continued outside the ring, resulting in a double count-out.

In other bouts, Hulk Hogan stopped Dominic DeNucci . . . Stan Hansen and Pedro Morales fought to a brutal draw with Pedro's Intercontinental belt on the line.

**ROCHESTER, MN—Correspondent: Craig Hansen**—Before the main event, Weasal posters were sold, a taunt at Bobby Heenan. Once the tag team match between the squad of Crusher and Buck Zumhoff against Nick Bockwinkel and Heenan began, everyone understood why Heenan is called "The Weasal." Zumhoff wanted to pay Heenan back for destroying his thousand dollar Cassette deck during a TV interview. Bockwinkel was sent in against Zumhoff to "soften him up" for Heenan. But it didn't work as an incensed Zumhoff blasted  
(Continued on page 48)



Bob Backlund and Sgt. Slaughter were both disqualified for battling outside the ring.



# YOU ASKED US

**Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR question! Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, PO BOX 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571. Questions will be answered only in this column and at our discretion!**

**Q:** "I would like to ask Bruno Sammartino Jr. how he felt about Larry Zbyszko's attack on his father, Bruno Sammartino"—Donna Withey, East Freetown, NY

**A:** "You know, it is a very difficult situation for a son to watch his father attacked,"

said Bruno Jr. "But what made it so hard for me was that it was Larry Zbyszko who did the attacking. I remember Larry coming up to our house and eating family dinner with us. You know, he was like a member of the family. Anyone else but



Bruno Sammartino Jr. (above) admitted that it was very difficult to see his father attacked by Larry Zbyszko.

Larry, that was my first reaction when I heard of that horrible attack. But if you think I felt bad, you should've seen Dad. He was grief-stricken. Finally, I think he is over it. But the scars will always be with him."

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**Q:** "Is there any chance Ivan Putski and Tito Santana will re-form their tag team?"—Billie Jo Calderone, Greensburg, PA

**A:** Both wrestlers echoed each other. "Well, Tito Santana



Although they currently wrestle in separate parts of the country, former WWF tag team champions Ivan Putski and Tito Santana would like to someday reunite.

is one of the finest wrestlers around and we will always be very good friends," said Putski, currently wrestling in Texas. "Right now, we have no plans." And Santana said, "Ivan and I stay in touch, swapping scouting reports and aiding each other in our game. But right now I'm really into some heavy-duty feuds up in the AWA. I don't know, maybe someday Ivan and I could get together again. I'm sure we'd both enjoy that."

*(Continued on page 54)*



# WHAT'S HAPPENING!

By BILL APTER

**T**HE MANIACAL MOON-DOGS, proteges of Captain Lou Albano, have won the World Wrestling Federation tag team belts from Tony Garea and Rick Martel.

"It was a great victory for the Captain," Albano boasted shortly after the controversial victory. "My Moondogs are going to cripple, main, pulverize, destroy, and humiliate every team they defend their title against. The

Captain's a genius, I trained my Moondogs to be the champeens they are today!"

To prove that he does not back down from anyone and always gives a deserving wrestler a chance at the title, NWA champion Harley Race has signed to wrestle United States Champion Roddy Piper. What is unusual about this is that like Race, Piper is a noted rule-breaker. Harley rarely puts his honors on the line against a



Many experts thought Lou Albano had finally gone too far. There would be no way he could ever mold The Moondogs into a championship caliber tag team. Well, once again the experts are wrong!



After disposing of his opponent, U.S. titleholder Roddy Piper attacks special referee George Scott. When asked why he attacked an official, Piper replied, "I felt like it."

rulebreaker. "The man is the U.S. champion and deserves a shot," Race said. We must commend him for his feelings on this matter.

Two familiar faces are returning to the WWF. One the fans hate and the other everyone loves and admires. The first man I'm talking about is George "The Animal" Steele. The other being the great

(Continued on page 52)



Every issue, this magazine praises the noteworthy and damns those who violate the spirit of wrestling's dignity. The praiseworthy are given a "thumbs up," the disgraceful are marked with "thumbs down." Here is this month's roll of honor and shame

# Thumbs Up



**THUMBS UP** to Barry Windham: He has avoided all temptations to turn rulebreaker. Surely Florida wrestling is a veritable cesspool of dishonest men eager to turn Windham from his straight ways. Yet Windham remains true to his word, true to his principles, and true to his fans.

**THUMBS DOWN** to Masked Assassin #1: If you want to be Southern champion, you must pay the price. Avoiding responsibility and having your partner wrestle in your place is utterly amoral. But who has ever accused this masked cretin of possessing morals? Fortunately, Assassin #1 lost his title to Sweet Brown Sugar.



**THUMBS UP** to The Grand Wizard: Despite his unsavory methods and questionable purposes, The Grand Wizard never relaxes from his single-minded pursuit of Bob Backlund's WWF title. If he isn't shepherding Sgt. Slaughter into the ring, Wiz is bringing Don Muraco into the area. This man is a tenacious bulldog.

**THUMBS DOWN** to Jerry Blackwell: Has he no shame? Is there nothing this corpulent monster won't do in order to brutally slash his way up the AWA ratings? By now, the name Jerry "Crusher" Blackwell has become synonymous with deceit and illegality. Surely he deserves the universal contempt of all righteous citizens everywhere.



**THUMBS UP** to Dusty Rhodes: For constantly carrying the fans' banner, Dusty Rhodes deserves high praise. There is no other wrestler who will risk his blood and body in every match just to please his fans.

(Continued on page 58)

# Thumbs Down



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# INTRODUCING

He is young and talented, good-looking with a wry sense of humor and a certain sense of himself which distinguishes him from other youngsters. Already, Brad Armstrong has made a big name for himself, never backing down, always respectful to friends and fans, and always talking about winning the title someday



# BRAD ARMSTRONG

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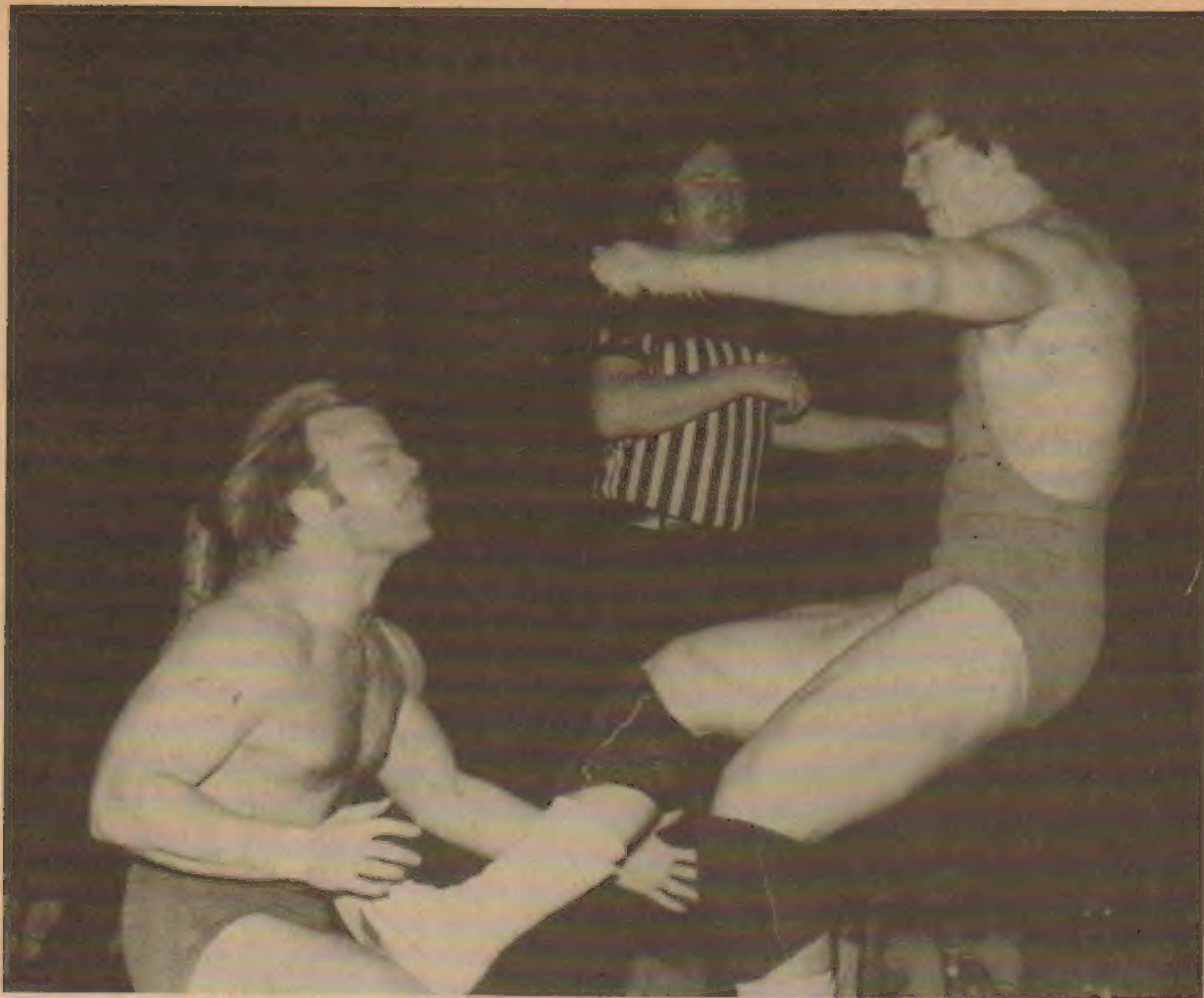
Brad Armstrong freely admits that he owes all his success to his father, Bob Armstrong. He would love to repay his Dad with a world title.

**A**MAZINGLY, BRAD ARMSTRONG is only 18 years old. It's amazing because he is so skilled, so poised, and has achieved so very much in such a short period of time.

"Yeah, I guess I've been very lucky, I mean, I'm only 18 and I've had the good fortune to make real fine use of my skills and have avoided serious injury. The fans have really taken to me, too. Yeah, I have to say I'm a lucky guy," said Brad.

"But I've gotta give a lot of credit to my Dad," he said of his father, Bob Armstrong, still an active wrestler. "He's the one who trained me, who supported me when I got down and kicked me in the pants when I got too blue. I owe everything to him. He's more than a father, he's like my best friend."





Armstrong, 5-11 and 208 pounds, wrestles in both Alabama and Tennessee. Already he has earned plaudits from friend and foe alike.

"That kid is one helluva wrestler," said Jerry Stubbs. "I've seen a lot of kids who are afraid to take a punch, not understanding that you gotta get your face hit every once and a while if you're ever gonna learn. But Brad has an amazing capacity to absorb knowledge. You can tell him and show him the most complicated maneuver around, and inside of a week he's doing it better than you. He's definitely a future world champion."

Brad will always remember his pro debut.

"Oh yeah, July 4, 1980, in  
(Continued on page 45)

Armstrong knocks the wind out of Stanley Lane with a kick to the solar plexus (above). Flying over Lane's back, Armstrong grabs his legs for an attempted sunset flip (below), a maneuver he learned from his father.





# Q&A

Each month, **THE WRESTLER** will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost on the fans' minds



Tommy Rich is not asking the fans to take his word that he will never betray them again. He wants the fans to judge him on his behavior in the ring, where all his aggressiveness will be channeled toward the destruction of Georgia's rulebreakers.

**Q:** Tommy, how's it feel to be back in Georgia?

**A:** Oh, mighty, mighty good. Once again, I want to take this opportunity to thank all my fans who wrote me those fine letters and who have been on my side, no matter what.

**Q:** Do you still want to discuss your brief rulebreaker career?

**A:** Well, I'd like to put it behind me.

**Q:** Can you?

**A:** I think so, but words won't do it.

**Q:** What do you mean?

**A:** Well, I don't think words do a whole lot of good when you're dealing with a situation like that. I can swear on a stack of Bibles that I'll never do a wrong thing again and it won't matter one bit.

**Q:** Again, why?

**A:** 'Cause so many people misuse and abuse the words, twist and mess around with the language. Lots of wrestlers lie, say they're gonna do this and that and just end up stabbing the wrestlers or the fans with those words.

**Q:** So you prefer action?

**A:** Absolutely. I'm gonna go out there and wrestle the





## TOMMY RICH

**T**O ALL, the name Tommy Rich represents many, many different images. To some, Rich is the greatest young wrestler to come into the sport in many a year. To others, Rich is a deceitful, ungrateful traitor who should never be trusted again. Rich has learned how to deal with both viewpoints. Back in Georgia, Rich moves ever so steadily toward erasing any suspicions and solidifying himself, again, as the top young scientific wrestler in the sport.



Tommy defeated Race in a non-title match with a sleeperhold, and he sees no reason why he shouldn't be able to repeat his success with Race's NWA title on the line. He knows he can look to the fans for support again.

way I know I can wrestle and the way fans expect me to wrestle and that's the end of that. No more words.

**Q:** Still, do you feel suspicions surrounding you?

**A:** Oh, a little. But that's

natural. People wonder exactly what I'm gonna be doing with my life. But I know what I'm gonna do.

**Q:** Which is?

**A:** No matter what, I'll be champion.

**Q:** NWA?

**A:** Whatever, maybe, maybe not, doesn't matter. I want a championship belt wrapped around my waist.

**Q:** Why do you think you can

*(Continued on page 46)*



# ARE WE WATCHING DUSTY RHODES COMMIT SUICIDE?



Ole Anderson grabs a bloody Dusty Rhodes and attempts to throw him through the ropes.

**W**HY DOES Dusty Rhodes do it?

"I want to win," said The American Dream.

Why does Dusty Rhodes absorb beatings and refuse to ever quit?

"No man alive whips Dusty," he said.

But why?

In order to determine Rhodes' obsessive determination to take on every tough opponent, to pull himself off the canvas even on the verge of physical collapse, we spoke to close friends of Rhodes, people who might give us insight into his dangerous path.

"Nothing motivates Dusty like the combat of a match," said a boyhood friend who requested anonymity. "He really liked the feeling of a fight. Give Dusty a good fight and he lights up like a Christmas tree.

"I recollect back in Texas, Dusty would get into a scuffle with a whole gang of guys and just keep on battling until his head looked like a bunch of strawberries. You gotta remember, Dusty has a lotta pride. He doesn't know how to give up. If Dusty has an ounce

What possesses Dusty Rhodes to take such unwarranted risks? In the past few months, Rhodes subjects himself to the gravest perils one could possibly endure within the squared circle. He has challenged the meanest wrestlers in the world. And why? What is Dusty Rhodes trying to prove?



of strength left in his body, he'll keep on charging forward, swinging with everything he has and just won't let himself give up."

That would explain, in part, why Rhodes engaged in an absolutely ferocious match against The Mongolian Stomper. But only in part. If anything, that match exemplified the violent pain of Rhodes.

Despite unleashing his full arsenal of skilled maneuvers, Rhodes suffered deep facial wounds and required over 30 stitches and nearly a transfusion afterwards. But it was what happened during the match that worries his friends.

"He shoulda stopped after he won by disqualification," said another of Rhodes' pals. "He had the match won, he had it in his hands and still he goes and keeps the war alive. He won, didn't he? Ain't that what it's all about?"

For Dusty Rhodes, mere winning isn't the goal.

"I want to stop men like Stomper from destroyin' my beloved sport," said Rhodes. "Guys like him and Race, hell, they don't deserve to be wrestlers. I'm not even talkin' about human beings, they ain't humans as far as I'm concerned."

"But how am I gonna stop them? You think just whippin' and knockin' them all over the arena is gonna stop them? Nope, you gotta end them once and for all, finish off their careers and end it real quick. Doesn't seem like anyone else is gonna be able to do it."

"So that leaves it up to me. I have devoted myself to stoppin' these animals and turnin' back these evil men. I don't care if I gotta get a beatin'. Hell, wrestling's been real good to me. I owe everythin' to this great sport and I won't let animals like Stomper ruin it and all."

"Even if it means that Dusty



After finishing his savage battle with Mongolian Stomper, Rhodes had to take on Stomper's ruthless manager, Don Carson. Dusty managed to open a wide gash on Carson's forehead before Stomper grabbed him from behind (above). Gene Anderson (below) is another man who would like to see Dusty try another occupation.







Dusty Rhodes is not afraid to mix it up with the sport's most vicious rulebreakers. If, for the betterment of the sport, he must use a chair (above) or assault his opponent outside the ring (below), he will do it. Dusty feels men like Mongolian Stomper must be shown the wrongs of their ways.



Rhodes gotta be sacrificed, and only he can do it," said a friend. "And you know, if there's these guys will be stopped."

Rhodes' almost holy mission is beginning to scare his close friends. One guy in the whole damn world who can lay the torch to these fellas, then it's

"He thinks he has the mission Dusty Rhodes.

"But he can't possibly do it alone. He can't travel to every area and take on the worst and meanest dudes around and endure punishment and not even be content to just win, but to kill the guy, there's none who ever lived with those kinda powers

"Dusty has to be satisfied just winning the matches and knocking his opponents about, not destroying them. He doesn't seem to realize he can't do it. And he surely won't listen to anyone. He just gets real angry and says he's gonna do it, he's gonna crush Stomper and anyone else who breaks the rules. I can't talk to him. No one I know can talk to him. He wants to do it, no matter the cost to his personal safety. And that scares the pants off me. Dusty's gonna find himself so exhausted one night he's not gonna have the strength to defend himself and instead of them going, it's gonna be . . . well, I don't even want to think about such a thing."

Obviously, neither does Dusty Rhodes. At this point, Rhodes has put more than honor and career on the line. He has jeopardized his life. □



# *Harley Race Tells Tony Atlas:*

## **"THE CHAMPIONSHIP'S A JOB FOR A MAN, NOT A BOY!"**

PHOTOS BY BRAD McFARLIN

**T**HROUGHOUT HIS LONG and controversial career, NWA champion Harley Race has presented one face to his public. Unlike some wrestlers who try and charm both press and fans, Race remains consistent.

Now some may find his bluntness irritating, or worse. But Race says what is on his mind and when he talks, people listen. But people didn't merely listen recently when Race blasted a top NWA challenger. The champion's words shot through the alliance like an earthquake.

"I'm sick and tired and just plain fed up with Tony Atlas' excuses. If the kid wants to be champion, then let him start acting like a champion instead of a snivelin' little punk who cries all the time.

"The championship's a job for a man, not a boy," snapped Race. "Maybe Atlas doesn't understand that. Maybe the kid



**Harley Race never minces words. He says what he thinks. That's why he receives such grudging admiration from both friend and foe. So the entire wrestling world sat up and took notice of Race when he chastised Tony Atlas. His words, and the reasons behind them, could ruin Atlas' brilliant career.**





In one day, Tony Atlas traveled from New York, where he competed in a bodybuilding competition, to Atlanta, where he challenged Harley Race for the NWA title. Atlas does some weightlifting with Race, thwarting his attack (above). Race smashes his foot into Tony's face (below right).

thinks he can just lift some of his weights and build up his muscles and he's gonna scare the belt off my waist.

"Well, Atlas, you better think again. You need some guts in your belly and you need some fire, and you don't have either one of those. Far as I'm concerned, Tony Atlas shouldn't even be ranked in the top 20 ratings," said Race.

While Race's explanation for Atlas' recurring injuries and inability to win the NWA title may not be entirely justified, Atlas has indeed suffered many injuries. And that asks the question, why?

For example, recently Atlas

participated in a muscle building contest in Queens, New York. After that afternoon's competition, Atlas flew to Atlanta for a title match against Race.

"I just wasn't in tip-top mental condition," Atlas said in explaining his failure to win that match.

Or another time Atlas explained a loss to Race away by pointing to an injured leg.

"I hurt my leg in a previous match," said Atlas.

Is Atlas prone to injuries? Is he afraid of Race? Does he use other reasons to explain what Race calls "repeated failures?" Or is Atlas' history of title losses easily understood?

Tony Atlas is extremely ambitious. He has worked hard to get to this point in his career. All his life, he dreamed of becoming a professional wrestler. And champion. But Atlas took a difficult route to the near-top.

"I love to lift weights," said Atlas, a former Mr. USA. "I really like that solitary kinda competition, buildin' myself up, workin' real hard, always settin' one goal and then another and another to try and break.

"When you push yourself like that, you're gonna get your share of injuries. And it ain't my fault that I got these injuries or that I push myself so hard. I want to be the best, whether it's wrestlin' or body building."

Perhaps Atlas is one of those workaholics, a man so driven, so pushed by ambition that he can never relax. And perhaps Atlas tries to do too much, tries to push his body that one step too much so such injuries become inevitable.

"I want to see how good I can be," said Atlas. "I don't want to ever have to relax. I don't want to ever say that there's a weight I can't make or there's a match I can't take. The only way you ever make it in this world is to work, work, and keep working, even





into the metal ringpost



beyond your capability "

But Atlas doesn't seem to realize that he is still a mere mortal—and not a superman. Atlas thinks he can go from bodybuilding competitions to matches back to weightlifting, flying around the country in pursuit of yet more goals to shatter, and *still* compete for the NWA title.

"It doesn't work that way," said Race. "Sooner or later, Atlas is gonna have to make that decision. If he isn't a coward, and I have my doubts, then he's gonna have to devote himself exclusively to one thing. If he thinks he can pump iron and still have enough to beat me, he's got another thing comin'. And he hasn't, right? He's still a contender, at best."

Atlas won't even consider



Atlas' massive arms capture Race in a sleeperhold, but Harley, always aware of his location in the ring, reaches out for the ropes. Race does not feel Atlas is a worthy challenger

such a possibility

"Ain't written anywhere that a man can't be great at two things," said Atlas. "I'll figure out some way, I'll get my body

so's I don't get injuries no more I'm gonna be the NWA champion and the greatest bodybuilder in the world. You just watch." □



**U**NLIKE SOME YOUNG-STERS. Bruno Sammartino Jr. isn't impatient. He understands the mechanics of wrestling. He knows what he must do and, most importantly, must learn in order to make it to the top of his profession.

He is a very poised, mature young man. And while possessed of a fiery temper, one certainly inherited, young Bruno displays a gentleness and calm while controversy and violence swirls around him.

"You know, I could have had main event shots," said Bruno Jr. "They offered me some shots, and I

# BRUNO JR.'S ROCKY ROAD TO THE TOP

**Even though he is young, talented, determined, and holds a famous name and legend, all has not been easy for Bruno Sammartino Jr. Down in the Mid-Atlantic area, Bruno Jr. learns his profession the hard way, giving and taking punishment. And besides the foes, Bruno Jr. must learn to deal with a new lifestyle.**



could have wrestled a few of the really top people in the Mid-Atlantic area. But I don't think I would have learned as much from that."

Right now, Bruno's wrestling such wily, cruel veterans as Swede

Hanson and Jim Nelson.

"Boy, both of those guys are sure mean," said Bruno Jr., shaking his head. "I tell you, they can really deliver a blow. But I'm glad they are mean. And I'm glad they go all out and try to break my face."

"That is the only way you can ever learn."

Bruno said many Mid-Atlantic people were surprised when he rejected main event offers.

"You know, one guy kept coming up to me and telling me

PHOTOS BY EDDIE CHESLOCK





Cleverly using his right elbow to hold Jim Nelson's upper arm in place, Bruno Sammartino Jr. pulls back on the wrist (above). Bruno throws Nelson with an armdrag, escaping his opponent's chokehold (right).

how if I worked hard, I could be champion real soon with my talent. And sometimes they would look at me like I was crazy. I mean, here's a kid, they must think, who wants to be champion but is taking the slow route to the top.

"I just don't see any reason to rush it. What good is challenging the champion if you're not ready? I have always believed that a champion has a sacred duty. You owe a great deal to the fans to be the very best. Doggone, that is what being champion is all about.

"But just as important, maybe even more so, is the sacred tradition of a champion. I don't care if you are champion of the Mid-Atlantic area or WWF or AWA or NWA or of your neighborhood, you must act like a champion.

"And to be very honest, I am not yet ready to be champion. I have a great deal to learn about wrestling. There are many subtle little things about the sport that I must still understand and appreciate before I can go full-steam ahead and win a title.

"That is why I have taken on veterans like Hanson and Nelson  
(Continued on page 47





# THE MAN WHO PAID BOB BACKLUND \$20,000 BREAK STAN HANSEN'S



Bob Backlund reaches back to fire a right at a prone Stan Hansen. But the WWF champion had no intention of breaking his challenger's neck. Someone is willing to part with a great deal of money to see that happen. There is a list of likely suspects, but no substantial evidence to draw a conclusion

**A** COURIER RANG Bob Backlund's door

"Yes?" Backlund answered

"Mr. Robert Backlund, WWF champion?"

"Yes, that's me," Backlund said proudly

"This is for you." The courier handed Backlund a thin manila

envelope. Quickly, he raced away from the door, leaving Backlund with a puzzled look and this strange package

Backlund returned to his living room, turned down his radio, and opened the envelope

"At first, I didn't think there was anything in it," recalled

Backlund. Until he opened it

The small booklet fell onto Backlund's lap. It was a bankbook. It was in Backlund's name. It was for \$20,000

"I couldn't believe it," said Backlund. "I hadn't the faintest idea what was going on. Then I saw the little note attached to



# TO NECK

The call was short and to the point. The bankbook arrived by courier two days later. All Bob Backlund needed to do in order to collect the \$20,000 was break Stan Hansen's neck. But who offered this huge sum to Backlund? Who wants Hansen crippled? The suspects make for an intriguing, if not frightening list

the book "

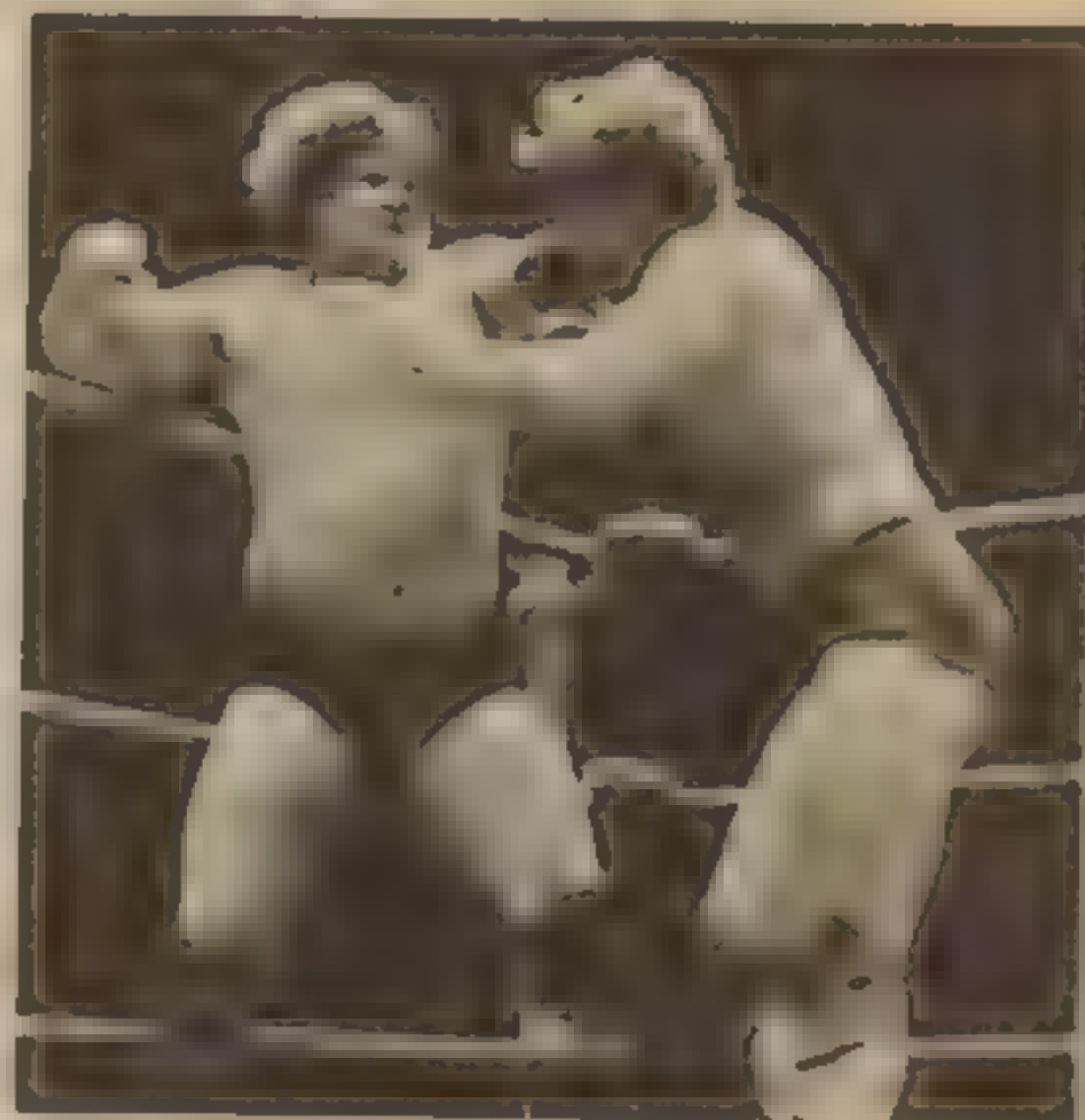
Its message was simple and to the point

"Well, it said this money was mine, that it could only be released by this guy, who I didn't know. He didn't give a name or anything. I just said I had to accomplish this one small thing and the money was mine."

Backlund sat in stunned silence for a while, re-reading the letter at least a dozen times, he estimated



Hansen leaves the ring to catch a little rest after fending off a tremendous offensive surge by Backlund



Though he wasn't going out of his way to break Hansen's neck, Backlund certainly didn't ease off his opponent. Backlund's piledriver greatly weakened his challenger (above left). Hansen grabs Bob by the hair and delivers a straight right to the forehead (top right). Backlund snapmares Hansen to the canvas (above right)

"It scared me at first, that someone would offer this kind of money for me to do this kind of thing. So I thought about it. Then I tried to come up with who would want this done."

Backlund ran a list over in his mind. He stumbled on several names, alarmed that he would

even consider them

"I had to find out who and why," Backlund said stubbornly

Intent on locating the source of this money, Backlund visited the bank. But officials didn't—or couldn't—tell him anything

"Hey, I understand why they

*Continued on page 62)*



**RIC FLAIR:  
"RODDY PIPER IS  
TOO SMART  
FOR HIS OWN GOOD!"**

PHOTOS BY EDDIE CHESLOCK





**U**NITED STATES Heavyweight Champion Roddy Piper already has a controversial reputation. His intellectual prowess amazes some and infuriates others. But no one has yet questioned Piper's mind. At least, until now.

"Roddy Piper is too smart for his own good!" shouted Ric Flair after their recent title match. "He thinks he's real cute and real coy, but one of these days, really soon, he's gonna overstep himself and land flat on his butt."

Now it isn't as if Flair is exactly the most impartial observer and analyst of Mr. Piper. After all, Piper dethroned Flair for the U.S. title. And Piper has never relaxed in his vile attacks of Flair and all his talents.

"No, I don't care what he says about me. I've been called worse



Challenging for the U.S. title he once held, Ric Flair bloodies his opponent. Flair believes that Roddy Piper is getting caught up in his own fantasy that he is a brilliant man who has revolutionized the sport of wrestling.

**Has Roddy Piper overextended himself? Or has the United States heavyweight champion given himself too much credit? No one will dispute Piper possesses brilliant cunning and skills. But Ric Flair believes that one day, very soon, Piper will go beyond even his talents. And fall into the pit of disaster.**

by a lot better," said Flair.

No, Flair focuses upon what Piper does. Or rather, what he tries to do.

"A lot of the reasons for Piper's success is his intimidation. He has such a big mouth and says he's gonna do this and gonna do that, he ends up psyching people out and all. But all you have to do is ignore his big mouth and you've got his number."

Even that isn't fully the thrust of Flair's remarks. He believes that Piper is in grave danger of over-extending himself.

And why?

"Because the clown honestly thinks he's some kinda superman with a super kinda brain and he's invincible. Thing is, Piper's convinced of this.

"He gets into the ring and thinks simply by using his mind



Piper walks directly into Flair's thrusting thumb. Though Flair got much the better of Piper in this match, Roddy still had his belt when it was all over.





Flair draws a cry of anguish from the champion as he painfully massages the sides of his face. Ric would love to show the world that all Piper's talk of being a superior human being is just that . . . talk.

he's gonna be able to whip anyone. Then he starts laying on all this garbage about his revolutionary ideas and how he's gonna control wrestling and a lot of other such nonsense

"Yup, it is nonsense. I tell you, if Piper were a normal sort of person who tried to keep within the boundaries of things and tried to act normally, maybe he wouldn't be in this sort of peril. But at the pace he's going, he's gonna push himself and stretch himself a might too thin and then he's gonna be wiped out, totally devastated.

"Piper just isn't as smart as he says, or thinks he is. Or as a lotta people who've been taken in by his intimidations think he is," said Flair

Piper laughs in that detached, arrogant manner of his when told of Flair's comments

"Well, what else would you expect from an ex-champion, huh?" Piper said, sneering. "You know, I find it quite amusing to listen to losers explain away their lack of success. It is quite remarkable, I must credit Flair for this, that he can come up with such unique, if not ridiculous theories to explain to a sympathetic, boorish public why this blond giant, a man with physical size is unable to hold a title for very long

"Fortunately, I am too polite to delve into an analysis of Ric Flair's talents, such as they are. Certainly Flair's record speaks for itself, a plethora of consistent mediocrity and the like

"But I find analyzing such boring, one-dimensional characters way beneath me. I am more concerned with weightier matters, with more important items, like the world of Roddy Piper and how I shall control this sport of pro wrestling

"Still, I will answer Flair's charge. Not charges, for much of what he says is drivel. But I will discuss Flair's astonishing





Flair clubs Piper on the top of the head with a powerful elbowsmash. Roddy flatly denies Flair's charge that he over-extends himself. And he has the U.S. belt as proof.

proposition that Roddy Piper over-extends himself.

"Now, how can such a worm like Flair possibly understand my dazzling intellect? What Flair perceives through his prism of stupidity is mere physical shadows, nothing more. He sees me implement a maneuver and puts it into his own frame of reference, pathetic as it is. He

cannot understand the vast thought processes behind such a maneuver. He cannot understand the infinite depths and reaches my superior mind has taken in order to create such a maneuver.

"Basically, what Flair describes is his own moronic ideas of what is possible and what isn't. And that flows from

jealousy, the by-product of a barbarian. Flair cannot stand seeing someone as superior as myself achieving anything he cannot understand. So he mocks it.

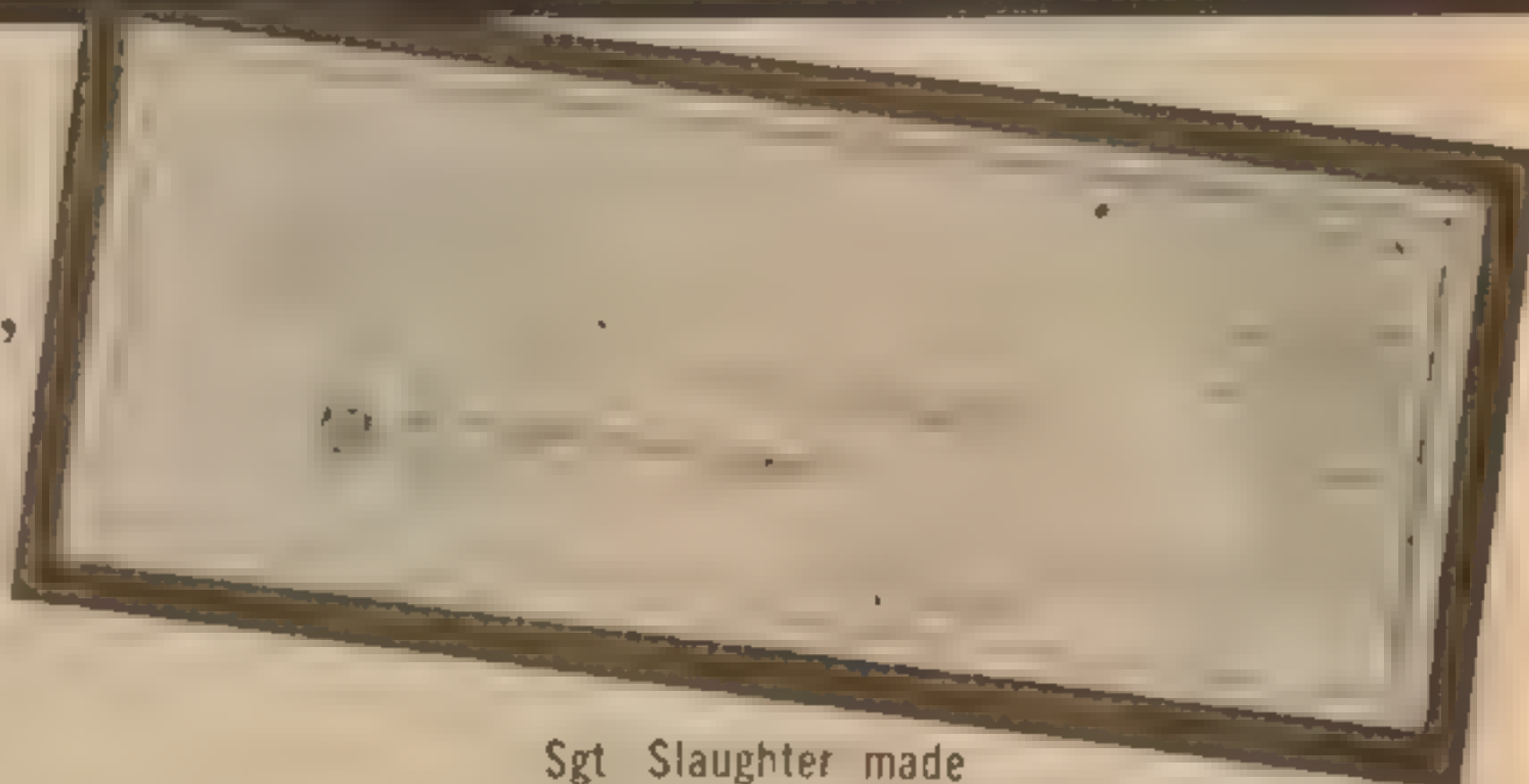
"Well, as I said before, I am still U.S. champion and Flair is still a challenger. No other statement sums up his situation better than that." □



# *Pat Patterson/Sgt. Slaughter*

## WHICH MAN

One man says he broke the hold. The other says he released the hold. Obviously, either Sgt. Slaughter or Pat Patterson are lying. But who is lying? What really happened during that fateful televised encounter? Is Patterson deserving of the money? Or is he deserving of ridicule?



Sgt. Slaughter made an open offer of \$5,000 to anyone who could break his Cobra Clutch. To Patterson, he offered twice that amount.



The challenge begins. Patterson sits down inside the ring and allows Slaughter to place him in the Clutch. First, Slaughter maneuvers Patterson's head into position (above left) and then the left arm (above right).



# Cobra Clutch Challenge: IS THE LIAR?

PHOTOS BY GREG NAPOLI



In pain, Patterson falls from the chair (above left), but he's always conscious of his task—and the \$10,000 check Pat's will allows him to get to his feet (above right), and in one quick move, he flips Slaughter to escape the Clutch (below). Did Patterson escape or did Slaughter let him go?



**S**GT. SLAUGHTER SAYS he released the Cobra Clutch. Pat Patterson insists he broke the Cobra Clutch. One of these men is lying.

But which?

The start of this fascinating tale reveals much about the personalities of the two men. Shortly after Slaughter began his reign of terror in the WWF, he enacted a challenge, more of a threat, to any wrestler who could break free of his deadly Cobra Clutch.

"I'll give \$5,000 in straight pay, no extra details required, no latrine duty, no guard duty, nothing like that, not even a 30-mile hike or 150 pushups, to any man capable of breaking my Cobra Clutch. And to

*(Continued on page 64)*





# **SWEET BROWN SUGAR WINS THE SOUTHERN TITLE**

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



**All Florida fans rejoiced the night Sweet Brown Sugar captured the Southern title, vacated when Dick Slater was stripped of his belt for failing to defend it. But this was no mere simple title match. To win this prestigious belt, Sugar had to defeat not just one Masked Assassin, but two!**

Sugar's capture of the Southern title needs to be told so the entire strange picture can be placed in proper perspective.

Dick Slater was Southern champion. However, the infamous rulebreaker refused to defend the belt on a regular basis and was stripped of the title.

"Only way they'd ever be able to whip me," snarled Slater. "You can bet none of them wimps could ever wrench this belt from my waist if'n they didn't have those cowardly commissioners backin' 'em up."

Thus, the title was vacant. Enter Sweet Brown Sugar from Texas. Enter Masked Assassin #1 from, well, some place in the Milky Way Galaxy.

Sugar's credentials in Texas were impeccable. He is a solid, talented wrestler, and he and Masked Assassin #1 quickly developed a violent rivalry.

"I don't like the little creep," said Assassin. "He's a creep and the only reason he wears a mask is 'cause he's so God-awful ugly he'd scare the whole arena into a dead faint."

Sugar holds a similar opinion of his foe.

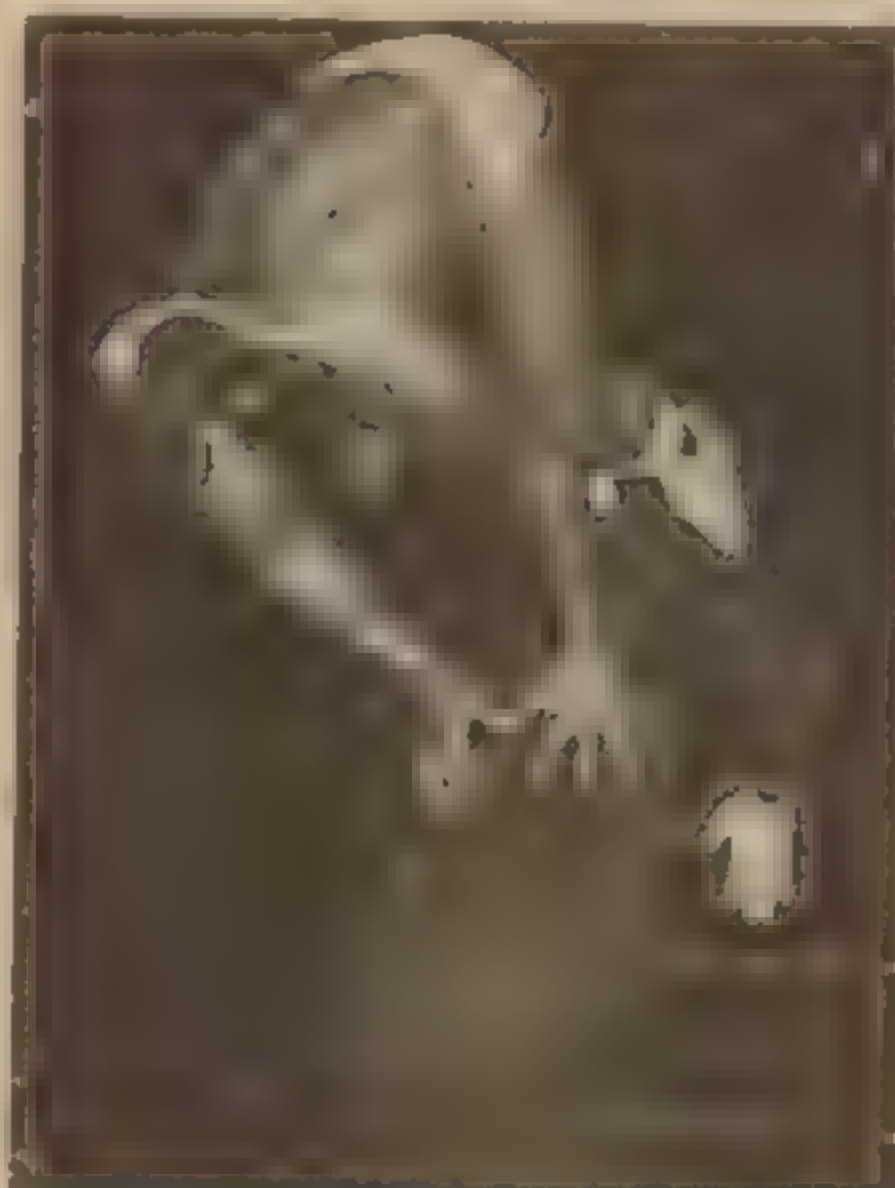
"He brings dishonor and disgrace to all the masked wrestlers of the world," said Sugar. "His ugly tactics reflect poorly on those of us who hold the wearing of a mask as a sacred honor, one that shouldn't be tread upon lightly."

As both had swiftly

eliminated all other competition in the area, their meeting for the Southern title appeared inevitable and natural.

"I'll murder him," vowed Assassin.

"His mask is gonna be filled with blood from what once was his face," threatened Sugar.



Sweet Brown Sugar punishes Masked Assassin #1 with his fists (opposite page) and dazzles him with his speed (above).

Thus the two met to determine who would hold the prestigious Southern title. And then the craziness started.

To fully understand what happened, one must keep in mind who manages Masked Assassin #1 and his cronie, Masked Assassin #3.

Sir Oliver Humperdink, the Benedict Arnold of Florida wrestling.

"The Assassins are the best, the greatest," he boasted. "I

**T**HE PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES surrounding Sweet Brown Sugar's capture of the Southern heavyweight title reads like a best-selling novel. Complete with intrigue, treachery, cowardice, and courage.

"I'm champion, that's all I know," said Sugar. "I won it fair and square. And I didn't cheat, I wrestled by the rules."

A recap of the amazing sequence of events leading to



fully believe with every fiber of my soul they shall whip and annihilate Sugar. I mean, Assassin #1 shall destroy Sugar. He requires no help, none except the full power and brilliance of my great and wondrous mind."

As usual, Humperdink's predictions were based more

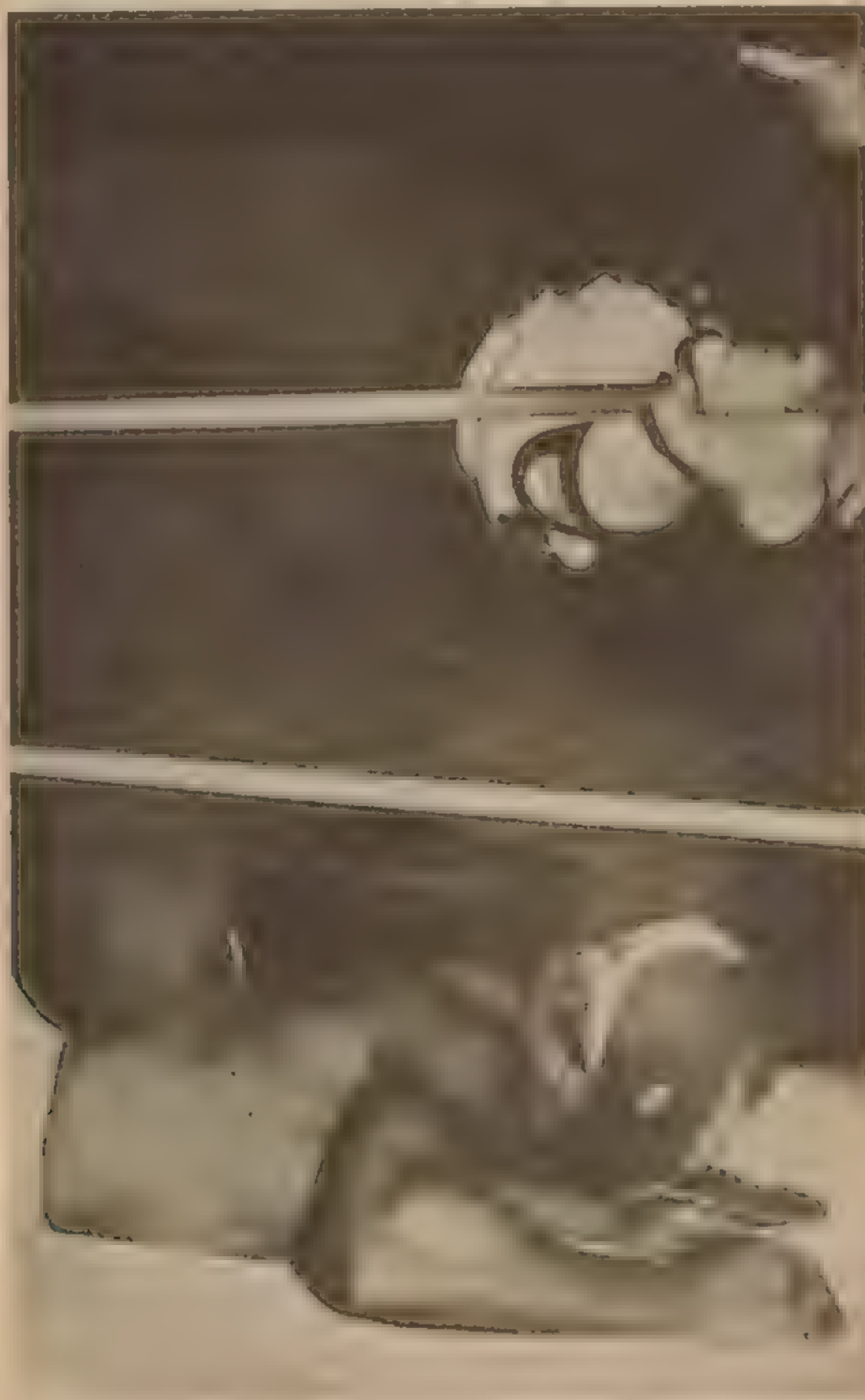
on hope than fact. Early in the match, Sugar seized control, part of his pre-match strategy.

"You have to get to a guy like Assassin #1 early, keep him off-balance, make sure he doesn't have any time to pull one of his famous illegal tricks," explained Sugar.

Ah, how prophetic his words became.

Leave it to Humperdink and the Masked Assassins to try and pull the all-time switcheroo. Leave it to Sweet Brown Sugar to obliterate that strategy.

Masked Assassin #1 was in trouble. Humperdink, at the ringpost nearest the action,



Assassin #1 uses the ropes to add leverage to his kneedrops (above). Later, while the referee was being distracted by Sir Oliver Humperdink, a fresh masked Assassin #3 took his partner's place. The strategy backfired as Sugar captured the belt (top right), leaving Humperdink in the ring trying to fathom what went wrong



started climbing into the ring. All he wanted to do was distract the referee. It succeeded. While the referee tried to keep Humperdink out of the ring, Masked Assassin #3 raced in, kicked Sugar and switched places with the other Assassin. The entire arena tried to alert the referee to this dastardly switch, but the confused official didn't realize what had occurred.

"Who cares which one it was? You expect that from crumbs like them. Didn't matter in the long run, did it?" asked Sugar, grinning.

It certainly didn't. Sugar disposed of Masked Assassin #3 to win the title.

"Yeah, a match like this gives you an extra good feeling," remarked Sugar afterwards. "It makes you really proud to not only win the title, but prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. Like those of Humperdink and the Masked Assassins." □



# BRAD ARMSTRONG

(Continued from Page 23)

Mobile, Alabama, against a tough dude named Jerry Brown. Man, it was welcome to the big time. There wasn't anything Brown didn't try and do to take my head off. But I hung in there, remembering all I'd learned. Oh, yeah, I won the match. A great way to start."

For Armstrong, that was just the beginning. Only six months after his pro debut, Brad captured the United States junior heavyweight title in a tournament at Mobile.

"What a night," he recalled. "The top stars in the area were there. Guys like Roy Lee Welch, Robert Gibson, Rick Fields, and Oki Shikina. When I was the winner, I thought I'd take off into orbit. I just couldn't control my excitement. For the next few days, I kinda floated around, whistling and singing to myself," said



Brad locks up Lane's left arm (left), lifts him to his feet, and slams him to the canvas (above). Armstrong has built a tremendous fan following throughout Alabama and Tennessee.

Armstrong.

"Then Dad told me that I should try and get my feet back on the ground if I wanted to stay champion. That's when I really understood how important it was to keep your sense of perspective and not get carried away," said Brad.

Even though he later lost the title, Armstrong delighted crowds everywhere with his brilliant title defenses and quickly became a big fan favorite.

"Oh, nothing like hearing the fans cheer for you," said Armstrong. "It can turn a match around when you hear the crowd supporting you like that. You get so pumped up and so excited you think you can beat anyone. Those rulebreakers don't know what they're missing by thumbing their noses at the fans."

Currently, Armstrong, who has held the Southeastern tag team title with father Bob, feuds with three mean men: Stanley Lane,

Randy Rose, and Dennis Condrey.

"Boy, they just like to hurt people," said Brad. "But I'm not afraid of them. I'll take the blows so long as I can get in my own licks. They may think I'm just a kid, but I'll show 'em that I can stay in there with the best of them."

"Why?" he asked. "Because I want to be world champion. I want to repay the fans for all their great support and I want to thank my father, even though nothing I can ever do can thank him enough." □



## Q & A

(Continued from Page 25)



Tommy admits that he felt a sick feeling in his stomach when he heard the boos during his recent spell as a rulebreaker. He likes looking to the crowd and seeing the people on his side. He draws strength from their encouragement.

- get the belt now?
- A: I'm wise and more mature. I know myself better. I've got more patience. And I'm a lot smarter. .
- Q: So all this aggravation and pain was worthwhile?
- A: Well (chuckles), maybe I can look back on it now and say it was, but at the time, it was a living nightmare. But I feel real good and I'm ready to take on all comers.
- Q: Like the Fabulous Freebirds?
- A: You can call them fabulous if you like.
- Q: What would you call them?
- A: How about bums and freaks? They're nothing more than a bunch of carnival bums who do nothing but shoot off their big mouths and dirty this great sport.
- Q: Do you dislike all three equally?
- A: Yeah, but for different reasons.
- Q: Let's take Terry Gordy.
- A: You take Gordy. He's an overgrown clod with hay between his ears.
- Q: And Buddy Roberts?
- A: A puppet, a fool, a clown.
- Q: And lastly, Michael Hayes.
- A: The brains of the mob, a twisted, evil kinda genius who's gonna get caught one of these days, tied up and whapped so damn hard and so damn long he ain't gonna be able to breath without wishin' he was dead. What's more, I think there's some sissy in Michael Hayes.
- Q: Are they the only objects of your ambitions?
- A: Nope, like I said, I still want Harley Race.
- Q: Would you wrestle him any differently?
- A: Yup.
- Q: How so?
- A: Oh, no, I ain't gonna say. Last time I made too many predictions and said too many things. This time, my fists will talk for me.
- Q: Tommy, thanks for coming on Q&A.
- A: You're real welcome. □



*(Continued from Page 33)*

Bruno Jr. was taught early about caution. Note how he maintains his distance from Nelson as he locks up his arm (above), not allowing Jim to use his free right arm. Sammartino finishes Nelson off with a spectacular rolling reverse cradle (below).



Just one match with them and you can learn all there is to know, on that level, about cruelty. They are savage men. They will stop at nothing to win a match. From them, I have learned how to avoid certain illegal maneuvers, how to recognize those kind of maneuvers and how to react.

"You know, you can practice something in the gym from morning to night, but until you actually do it in the arena, with someone who is determined to break your skull wide open, with all the pressure of the fans shouting and screaming, you cannot call yourself ready to be champion.

"So I must wait and be patient. I know my time will come. But when it does, I must be ready for it. I want to be champion very badly, but I want to be champion a long time."

Another aspect of wrestling young Bruno has had to contend with is the sudden loneliness.

"You know, sometimes it does get very lonely when you are on the road and traveling. You try and develop friendships, but you must be careful sometimes not to get too close because in this crazy sport, you never know who will be your friend on Monday and your enemy on Tuesday. So I keep to myself, read a lot of books, careful always to get my sleep and work out. Staying in shape can be difficult when you travel.

"You know, you can lose your entire physical shape with too many fast food hamburgers. So I have gotten into cooking, making some really nutritious dishes. Dad taught me about cooking."

Also, Bruno Jr. has had to handle those who want to get at his father through him.

"Oh, there are these guys who have it in for Dad and they think by attacking me they can somehow get at him. But it doesn't work that way. Sooner or later they will understand I am my own man. I may have that famous last name, but I am an individual." □



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## CORRESPONDENT REPORTS

(Continued from Page 8)

Bockwinkel and then got his revenge on "The Weasal."

In other matches, Brad Rheingans defeated Steve Regal . . . Tito Santana bodyslammed Crusher Blackwell.

**DAYTONA BEACH, FL.—Correspondent: Nick Boccuzzi**—One of the greatest nights in Daytona Beach wrestling history took place with Dusty Rhodes meeting arch-rival Dory Funk Jr. The match saw Rhodes in control throughout the early part until Lord Al Hays, Funk's manager, jumped into the ring. Obviously Hays expected his interference to stop The American Dream, but he was mistaken. Rhodes took both Hays and Funk, rammed them together, and walked out of the ring the victor.

In other bouts, Barry Windham defeated Masked Assassin #3 . . . Sweet Brown Sugar bested R.T. Tyler . . . Jerry Brisco outmaneuvered Masked Assassin #1 . . . Manny Fernandez stopped Hans Schroeder.

**HOUSTON, TX.—Correspondent: Rick Garcia**—In the main event, NWA champion Harley Race took on Wahoo McDaniel. Race won the first fall and McDaniel came back to capture the second fall. In the third and decisive fall, Wahoo had Race in the corner, thrashing away. Then the referee came in to break it up. Incensed, McDaniel tossed the referee over the top rope and returned to Race. Again the referee intervened, and this time Race



Dory Funk Jr. is dazed and confused after an unsuccessful encounter with a fired up Dusty Rhodes.



threw him over the ropes. Neither man would stop, even though both were bleeding profusely. It took four wrestlers to separate them as the title match ended in a double-disqualification

In other bouts, Gino Hernandez stopped fan favorite Chavo Guerrero . . . Tiger Conway Jr. took the American Brass Knuckles title from Tank Patton . . . Black Gordman beat back Relampago Leon . . . Evelyn Stevens won the Texas Girls' title from Susie Green.



Blackjack Mulligan was very impressive in his Texas Streetfight with Bobby Duncum.

**BUFFALO, NY—Correspondent: Joe Tritto**—In the main event, Bobby Duncum met Blackjack Mulligan in the always exciting Texas Streetfight match. Anything goes in this kind of match, and everything went this evening. Duncum attacked Mulligan before the bell, not even giving the ring announcer time to introduce the wrestlers. However, Mulligan fought back and soon both wrestlers were bleeding. Still they continued. After 10 minutes, Mulligan snared Duncum and put him away for good.

In other matches, Paul Jones and Masked Superstar stopped Ray Stevens and Jimmy Snuka . . . Tony Parisi defeated Ron Ritchie . . . Hussein Arab bested Mad Dog Vachon. ☐

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from Page 12)



Veteran wrestling announcer Gordon Solie is now joined by Barbara Clary (at his left) and Jerry Brisco. Barbara, the first female wrestling commentator, adds spice to the shows with in-depth features, while Jerry adds knowledgeable insights.

Mil Mascaras . . . Bobby Jagers, wrestling in Kansas City, is feuding with Terry Taylor . . . The newly formed tag team of Ivan Putski and Chavo Guerrero are keeping



Intercontinental Champion Pedro Morales is willing to accept Sgt. Slaughter's \$5,000 Cobra Clutch challenge. So far, Slaughter has not accepted.

Texas rooters on the edge of their seats . . . Hot Texas war: Terry Funk is desperately trying to unseat CWA titleholder Billy Robinson.

Randy "Macho Man" Savage went on a rampage in a Kentucky arena where he was battling Ronnie Garvin in a "Street Fight." Before the dust cleared, Randy had used brass knucks to kayo Garvin, two referees, and several wrestlers who had come to Garvin's aid. Compliments are in order to Gordon Solie's new broadcast team of "Championship Wrestling From Florida." Jerry Brisco and Barbara Clary are doing one fine job!

Southern Champion Sweet Brown Sugar is amazed that former champion Dick Slater has not even requested a shot at his old title. Slater was stripped of the title for failure to defend it often enough, and Sugar won the belt in an elimination tournament. We

contacted Slater, who said, "That hunk of tin belt is not worth the effort. If they think I am annoyed that I was stripped of the title and now some Halloween reject is holding it, they are crazy. Now leave me alone!" Thanks Dickie!

Intercontinental Champion Pedro Morales has agreed to be the next "victim" of Sgt. Slaughter's "Cobra Clutch." "I know I can break out of it," notes Morales. "I am ready for anything baby, and I will show Slaughter his hold is one I can always break!" . . . Sgt. Jacques Goulet is now under the management of the hated Sir Oliver Humperdink. Since turning his back on Dusty Rhodes, Humpy is now Florida's most hated individual.

George Wells, one half of the ex-Mid-Atlantic tag team champions (his partner was Dewey Robertson) is now teaming with Johnny Weaver in an effort to lift the belts from Mr. Fuji and Tenru. Why did George and Dewey split? "Dewey had some other commitments after we lost the belts," George explained. "I'm sure



Sadistic Mr. Fuji and his partner, Tenru, might soon have to defend their Mid-Atlantic belts against George Wells and Johnny Weaver.



we'll team again, but right now I am very, very pleased with Johnny."

After a convincing win over the duo of John Studd and Crusher Blackwell, the re-formed duo of Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell will get a long-awaited title match with AWA Tag Team Champions Jesse Ventura and Adrian Adonis.

It appears that Victor Rivera has had a complete change of heart. He has gone from rulebreaker to fan favorite again. His wars against John Tolos and The Twin Devils in California have once again endeared him to the fans . . . Ray Stevens, one half of the NWA tag team champions along with Ivan Koloff, has been traveling into the AWA to team with ex-partner Nick Bockwinkel. Stevens' goal? To hold two major tag team titles simultaneously.

Because of his refusal to defend the Southwest title within a 30-day period, Tully Blanchard has had



Tully Blanchard was stripped of his Southwest title for failure to make a defense in 30 days.

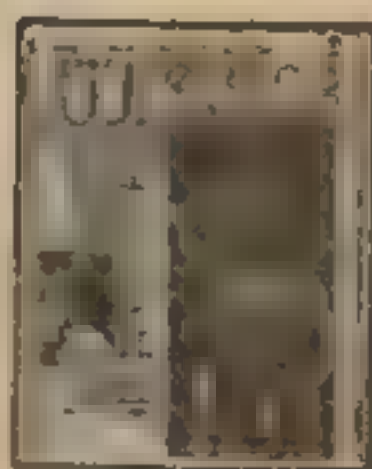
the belt taken from him. A tournament is being held to determine a new champion . . . Tom Pritchard won a "Pole Battle Royal" in Los Angeles. Prize money is put high atop a pole and the first one to climb the pole gets the loot.

And that's what's happening. See you next time! ☐

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## (Continued from Page 10)



\*\*\*

**Q:** "Why is Don Caron periodically teaming with Mongolian Stomper instead of exclusively managing the Stomper?"  
Suzanne Sulaiman, Birmingham, AL

**Q:** "Does Crusher think he and Crusher Blackwell might be able to bury their feud and become friends?"—Evelyn



A: "Now, now, I am a multi-talented, concerned, Southern gentleman who only wants to show the world, the whole world and nothing but the world, to understand, to appreciate, to realize that



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Q: "How does Barry Windham feel now that he is Florida champion?"—Burt Tamprini, Orlando, Fl

A: "Oh, this has been like a dream come true for me," said Windham. "All your life, you dream of that one glorious moment when you can reach the very top of your profession. For me, still a kid with a lot to learn, to come up and win the Florida championship is just unbelievable. Some mornings I wake up and pinch my arm just to make sure that this isn't a dream and I really can go to the arena that night and have the ring announcer introduce me as the Florida champion."

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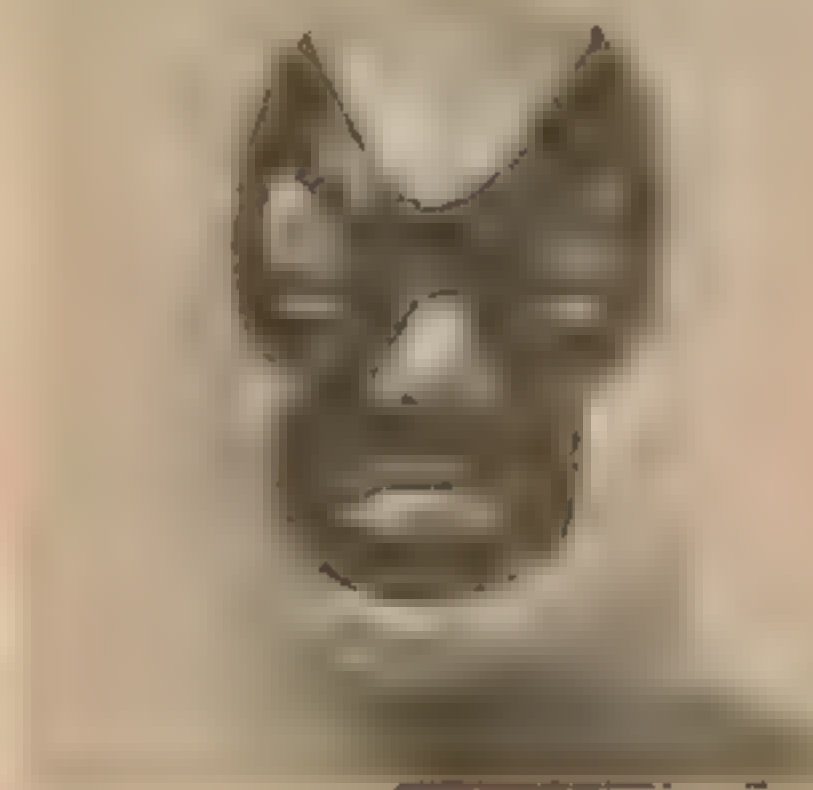
# THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

(Continued from Page 18)



**THUMBS DOWN** to Ray Stevens: We hope he is satisfied. After he and Jimmy Snuka lost the NWA title to Paul Jones and Masked Superstar, Stevens vowed to do anything and everything to regain the title. That is why he formed an alliance with untrustworthy Ivan Koloff. Stevens might learn the price of winning the title isn't worth the price of turning his back to Koloff.

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**THUMBS UP** to Chavo Guerrero: He never alibied. He never complained. He simply shrugged his shoulders, narrowed his eyes and set about regaining the International junior heavyweight title from Gino Hernandez. His dignity in defeat should be a lesson to all who blame others for their misfortunes. As Guerrero demonstrates, if you blame another for your defeats, you cannot take credit for your victories. ☐





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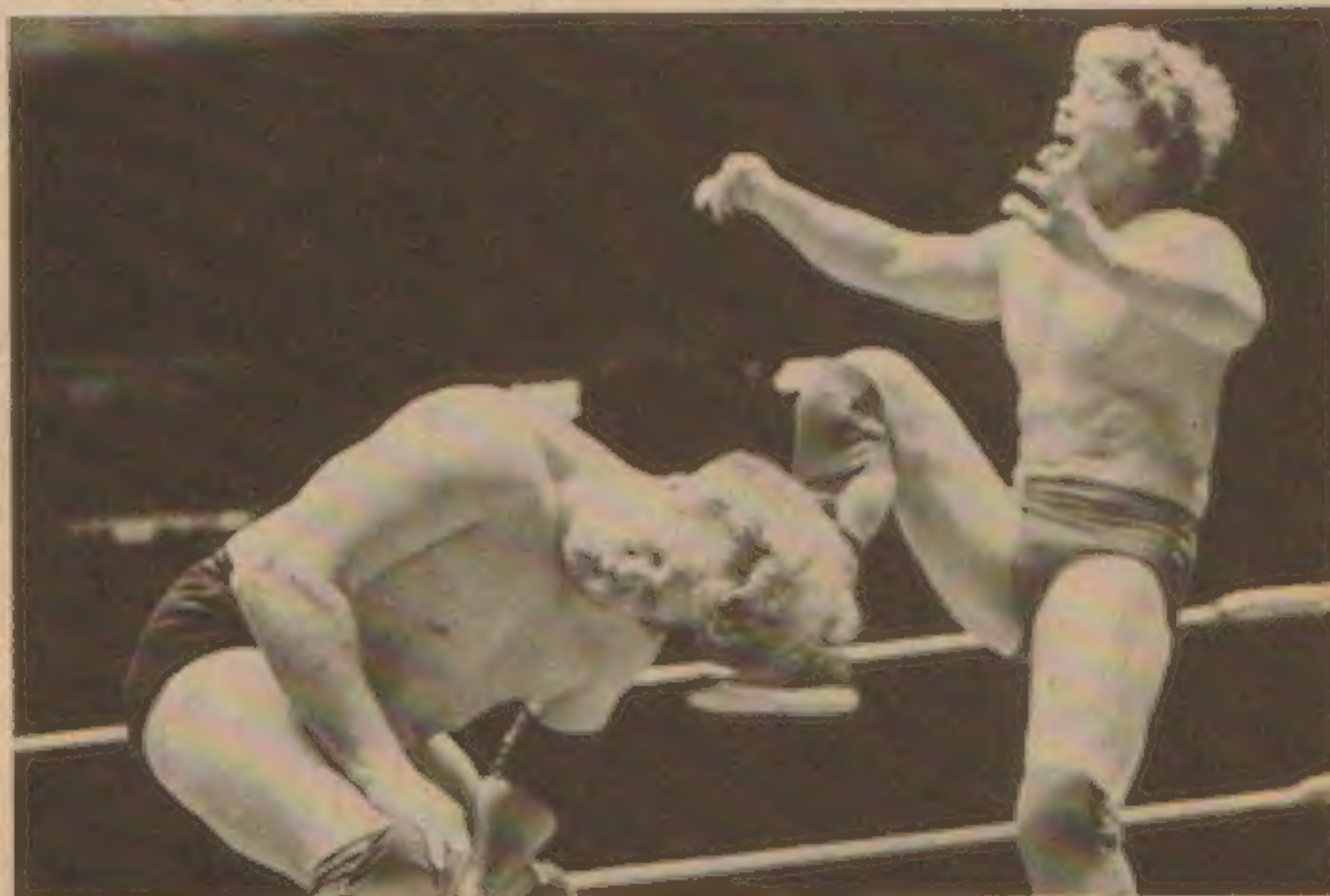
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## BACKLUND • HANSEN

(Continued from Page 35)



Backlund backs Hansen into a corner and unleashes a vicious overhand right to the jaw (above). Bob catches Hansen in the head with a punt that would have made Ray Guy proud (below). Hansen shows a look of fear as the WWF champion throws yet another right (opposite right).



acted that way. They have to protect people's privacy, even when it comes to this," said Backlund, shaken by the experience.

Thus Backlund turned the note and bankbook over to *The Wrestler*. He asked for our help. It wasn't easy.

Why would someone want to pay Bob Backlund \$20,000 to break Stan Hansen's neck. Who would gain from it? That was the obvious question. Would it be someone who has feuded with Hansen in the past, someone like Bruno Sammartino?

"Bruno?" asked Backlund, appalled.

Would it be someone envious of Hansen, perhaps someone from another area, or just perhaps, someone still in the WWF. Maybe someone who resents him like Hulk Hogan?

"I thought of him," admitted Backlund.

Or was it a manager, a jealous madman like Lou Albano or The Grand Wizard?

"Maybe," said Backlund.

Thus each of these areas had to be explored. First, it had to be determined if this was Bruno Sammartino's method of revenge.

"You know, I would never, ever pay anyone to hurt another



person," yelled Sammartino. "It is not my style. I would not treat anyone like that or put that kind of pressure on a man. Besides, I want Hansen for myself. I want to feel his neck breaking off in my own hands. I don't want to give anyone else that pleasure."

What about Hogan?

"Me and Stan are friends," Hogan insisted. "Hell, the two of us are buddies. I wouldn't want nothin' to happen to him, just 'cause he got a Madison Square Garden shot at Backlund and I



didn't, think I'd want to put a hit on him for that, huh? No way, man, we're buddies, even if he can come right in from nowhere and get a title match in the Garden and I don't, no hard feelings."

"Hansen's a fine man, a fine human being, I wish him all the luck in the world, I'd put his poster in my bedroom if the walls weren't filled with my own face," said Albano.

"I think Hansen shares the same purpose we all share, which is breaking Mr. Robert Backlund into a million pieces and dethroning him from that WWF pedestal," Wizard said.

Then who was it?

We couldn't find out. Backlund never collected the money. Apparently, it will remain an unsolved mystery. Maybe you, the fans, can help us out. □

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## Pat Patterson/ Sgt. Slaughter

(Continued on page 41)

Pat Patterson, a man who couldn't even pass an *Army* physical, I'll give \$10,000 on the spot, but only to Patterson.

"Why more to Patterson? Because the General, the great military mind that is Grand Wizard, hates Patterson so much that he is willing to donate \$5,000 from his military pension to make it even more enticing to Patterson since that cowardly deserter wouldn't risk a hair on his ugly head to break the Cobra Clutch."

While Slaughter disposed of opponent after opponent, Patterson seethed on the sidelines.

"I don't like that guy and I never will," snarled Patterson.

After one match, Slaughter offered Patterson his chance. But Pat turned him down.

"I'll do it when I'm ready, not when Slaughter's ready," yelled Patterson.

And then that momentous moment occurred. Slaughter was scheduled to put his Cobra Clutch on The Black Demon during a televised match. But as Slaughter approached, The Demon just shook his head and refused to go on.

"I wasn't surprised," Slaughter said. "You get used to dealing with cowards."

Slaughter and Wizard left the ring and were on their way back to the dressing room, but made a quick stop at the press table, where Patterson was working as the WWF television color man, for an impromptu interview.

"When I am doing color commentary, I must be an impartial journalist and put aside my feelings," Patterson once explained.

In the course of the interview, however, Slaughter leaped off the questions at hand and verbally assaulted Patterson. For the veteran, that was the final attack.

"I don't take that from no man."

he said.

Patterson ripped off his shirt, climbed into the ring and dropped onto the stool, challenging Slaughter right then and there. At first, Slaughter debated whether to accept Patterson's challenge.

"I wanted to make sure there'd be no funny stuff," he said. "You know Patterson, he'll cheat at the drop of a service revolver. Then I felt sorry for him and decided to go ahead with it."

Slaughter lumbered into the ring, ignoring the fans' taunts of "Gomer, Gomer!" The Cobra Clutch challenge began.

Both men strained and strained, their neck muscles bulging and their faces reddening. At the critical moment, Patterson broke the hold and went free.

Or did he?

"I broke that hold, I broke it, I did it fairly, I earned the money and exposed Slaughter for the bum



Driven to madness by his embarrassment, Sgt. Slaughter brutally attacks Patterson after the challenge. Dom DeNucci and Rick Martel rushed to Pat's aid (above), but not before Slaughter could open a horrible gash over Patterson's eye (opposite right).



he is," screamed Patterson.

"I was afraid the strain was becoming too much for him," said Slaughter. "Even I have sympathy for a mere buck private and so I released the hold. Do you honestly think that a buck private like Patterson could break the hold of Sgt. Slaughter?"

Immediately after the hold ended, Slaughter attacked Patterson, gashing a deep wound in his forehead. Patterson had to be carried from the ring.

"He got his way this time," Patterson said. "He got away with it. He knows he is lying, he knows he owes me \$10,000. But it isn't the money. Slaughter talks about all his principles and military code of honor, but the first time he has an opportunity to show his morals and principles and back up his words with action, he doesn't and tries to squirm free. Well, I'm waiting for Slaughter. Somewhere, somehow we will meet again and this time I won't care if he puts up \$10,000. It won't be money I'm after—but his head."



Fittingly, the Grand Wizard had the final word.

"Sgt. Slaughter will destroy Patrick Patterson and leave him a crippled hulk," Wizard said. "Sgt. Slaughter will hold nothing back. Patrick Patterson is a dead man." □

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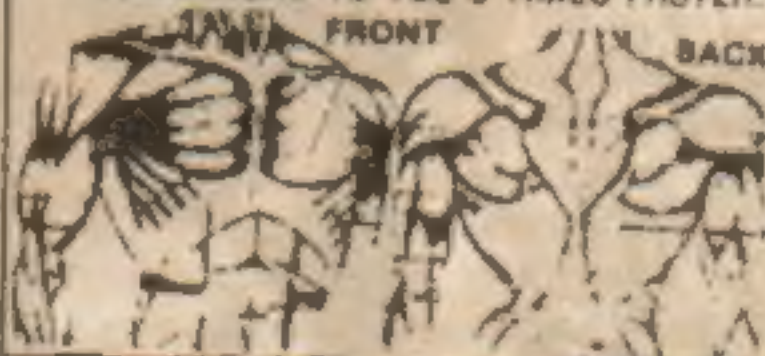
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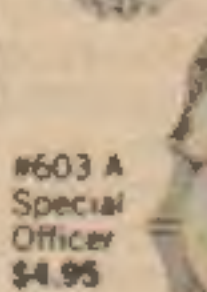


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